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working practices, there is an elusive unity of method» (p. 135). The Japanese system demands a heavy involvement of management in daily details and the western supervisors are unprepared to it. A comprehensive and detailed expertise in the design and control of production is taken for granted in the case of any Japanese manager. A close contact with day-to-day operations is expected even at the highest levels of management.

There is an obvious need to revitalize the notion of detailed practical exercise combined with general managerial knowledge and experience, reconcile managerial delegation with the management by detail, make management strong not by power but by expertise. The whole system has to be task-oriented and leadership is mainly a problem of implementing it in practice. The performance of work-groups can be affected much more by the design, planning and control of work than by an exterior process of motivation. Much that is now taught to managers under the rubric of motivation, leadership and the behavioural sciences, could perhaps be profitably replaced by new topics in the design and operation of production systems (p. 139).

A shared outlook and discipline bring together within the Japanese system supervisors and subordinates, generalists and narrow specialists, people representing various disciplines and different educational levels. This is exactly what seems to be much missing in the modern western world. The career path based only on individual achievement is in the basic disagreement with team work. It seems necessary to question several traditional assumptions in order to become really open to absorb and digest several useful aspects of the Japanese style of management.

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Abolition and After the Paper Box Wages Council, by C. Craig, J. Rubery, R. Tarling and F. Wilkinson, Research Paper no 12, Department of Employment, London, June 1980, 98 pp.

Since the Conservative Government under Margaret Thatcher was elected in May 1979 one of its strategies in the field of industrial relations has been the steady reduction in the number of bodies and mechanisms affecting the determination of pay levels and conditions in the United Kingdom. Example of this policy include the abolition of the Comparability Commission which attempted to evaluate public sector wage claims in relation to levels in the private sector, the winding up of the Civil Service Pay Review Board and the repeal of both Schedule 11 of the 1975 Employment Protection Act and of the Fair Wages Resolution, both of which provided a statutory procedure for comparability claims by trade unions and employers associations in certain situations.

In the context of such a policy it is not surprising that some Governmental eyes have turned to the system of Wages Councils and in particular to the possibility of its abolition. Thus, when asked in December 1982 in the House of Commons whether the system would be retained the Secretary of state for Employment replied succinctly.

«I can give ... no such undertaking.»

In the light of such a background the Research Paper commissioned by the Department of Employment from the Cambridge team of Craig et al. has a particular interest for students of economics and industrial relations as it analyses the situation in one former Wages Council industry (Paper Box) three years after the relevant Council was abolished.

The Paper starts with a brief chronicle of the system of Wages Councils, a system of tripartite bodies charged with the setting of minimum wage rates and conditions in industries where collective bargaining has been difficult to establish voluntarily. They comment

that the number of such Councils has been steadily reduced over the years and note that since 1960 there has been

«increased pressure to abolish wages councils and a further 17 have been dispensed with, while those that remain have been under consideration for reform or abolition.»

They then move to a fairly detailed examination of the industry or more correctly «industries» as they demonstrate that a high level of heterogeneity exists between the different sectors that were brought together by the Paper Box Wages Council. They suggest that the industry can be best considered by examining three sectors, 'Box', 'Fibreboard' and 'Carton'.

The 'Box' sector was concerned with the production of mainly rigid boxes as in shoe-boxes. This is a traditionally labour-intensive sector involving specialist workers and found itself in a declining market in recent years as customers have switched to cheaper cartons and other forms of packaging.

The 'Fibreboard' sector makes cases from lined corrugated paper with the edges glued or stitched together to form a rigid structure, though they are generally produced and delivered in a flat form. Fibreboard production is now largely automated. This sector has gradually increased its share of the total industry sales in recent years.

'Carton' production is also largely automated. Here the containers are produced flat to be assembled later by the purchaser and while most boxes have printed material attached externally, the carton manufacturer customarily prints directly on to the product. Thus this sector has developed strong links with the printing industry links which as the authors note,

«have had a significant impact on collective bargaining and served to disassociate further the large carton sector from the box section of the industry.»

Recommendation of the abolition of this Wages Council was made in a Report of the

Commission of Industrial Relations in 1975. The rationale behind this recommendation was somewhat unorthodox being that the employers' body, the British Paper Box Association was using the existence of the Wages Council as an excuse for not becoming involved in the establishment of adequate regulative machinery and not entering into negotiations with the trade unions. In coming to this conclusion the C.I.R. took account of assurances from the major unions involved that resources would be devoted to stepping up recruitment in unorganised areas of the industry.

Craig et al's post-abolition evaluation of the situation of 50 firms traces the developments that have taken place in the industry since abolition and compare these with the pre-existing situation. They recognise that some progress has been made toward effective collective bargaining but that there is still much needed to be done, particularly with regard to the smaller firms, where they feel that relative terms and conditions have fallen back. They still note a lack of commitment in many firms to meaningful collective relations and indeed to the opening of a dialogue with the trade unions, while at the same time they feel that the unions have achieved less than dramatic results in their recruitment programmes and even where an agreement was engineered between the employers association, B.P.B.A. and the unions S.O.G.A.T. and G.M.W.U., all parties appeared less than enchanted with it.

«The failure to establish a system of effective collective bargaining in the small-firm sector is partly attributable to institutional factors. The trade unions have adopted a negative attitude to the development of collective bargaining in the small-firm and box sector because, in their view, this sector has all but disappeared and so there is little point in attempting to recruit. Direct negotiation with the B.P.B.A. is considered a more acceptable method of setting minimum wages than the anachronistic Wages Council, but the trade unions do not consider the agreement to

provide adequate wage rates or conditions. When they succeed in securing effective representation of B.P.B.A. firms their main aim is to improve upon B.P.B.A. conditions and often to remove workers from the scope of the B.P.B.A. agreement, by implementing an alternative national agreement with higher base rates.

... More important, on the institutional side, is the attitude of the employers in the small-firm and box-making sector. The firms supported the establishment of an agreement between the B.P.B.A. and the trade unions to fill the gap created by the abolition of the Wages Council. The alternative was to leave themselves open to pressure to adopt other packaging agreements, or even the print agreement, as the basis for wage determination. However most of the B.P.B.A. firms have accepted the change to national, voluntary collective bargaining only because it has made little effective difference to their methods of wage determination..»

Thus the authors remark that although the decision to abolish the Council was a reasonable one in the circumstances, successful development of collective bargaining was dependent on a number of factors. In the event these factors have not borne the sought-for fruit with the result that abolition has brought little of benefit to many workers in the Paper Box industry. As Craig et al conclude

... «there is little evidence that the abolition of the Paper Box Wages Council provided any benefits which could justify the removal of protection against low pay — protection still required by a minority of the industrys' labour force.»

The Report is useful indeed. A large amount of data has been generated by the survey and this is presented in a clear and readable form. The message is obvious. Once the decision to abolish statutory support through a Wages Council is made the

likelihood of vigorous collective bargaining being established as a replacement is by no means a certainty. If collective bargaining fails to develop into this vacuum there is a strong possibility that the relative position of wages and conditions of a number of workers will deteriorate as in the Paper Box industry. It is to be hoped that this consequence is appreciated by politicians before decisions are made to expose more groups of British workers to the principles of Ricardian economics.

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Upward Mobility by the staff of 'Catalyst',
New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston,
1982, pp. XXX + 292,
ISBN 0-03-056163-9

This is a book for women how to overcome the career problem and go successfully ahead against all hindrances and discriminations: how to make an effective self-evaluation and given your Ego a money boost; how to make an adequate diagnosis of the work situation, hierarchies and power, workmates, etc.; where to find prospects for moving up; which skills are needed for getting ahead; how to make the personal balance of assets and liabilities; how to prepare for a better job on a shoestring budget; which is the real value of formal training; what high visibility can do for a candidate; how to make the right connections; how to recognize the lucky break and exploit it; how to get recognition together with an adequate salary, title and status; how to utilize in the office politics the rules of the game; how to make tokenism work for you.

This book is based on the assumption that women need to break out of traditionally female and overcrowded job fields and enter the less familiar, less obvious, but more promising, lucrative, and presently male-dominated areas of business, science, and technology.